

MAR 1952 51-4C

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CLASSIFICATION RESTRICTED

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Greece; Rumania

SUBJECT Political; Sociological - Minorities

HOW  
PUBLISHED Daily newspaper

DATE DIST. 2 Apr 1953

WHERE  
PUBLISHED Athens

NO. OF PAGES 2

DATE  
PUBLISHED 12 Feb 1953

LANGUAGE Greek

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

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DENIAL OF RUMANIAN CHARGES OF PERSECUTION OF KOUTSOVLACHS IN GREECE

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Comment: On 12 February 1953, Ethnos published an article by Prof Ap. V. Daskalakis on the Koutsovlachs, a minority group living in various areas of Western Greece. The article is in answer to various Rumanian charges that this minority is being persecuted by the Greeks. It also answers charges that the writer, in a previous article on this minority [redacted] had twisted the facts about the original nationality of this minority. The following report is a summary of Prof Daskalakis' answer to these charges.

The Red Rumanian press is continuing to curse me foully and to characterize me as a "Greek fascist scientist" ready to exterminate all those unfortunate souls "who speak the Rumanian language and who are of Rumanian nationality, living in their native land of Macedonia."

The point is that I had only presented my own simple ideas in the previous article on this subject, as concluded from the anti-Greek activity and anti-Greek sentiments of the Koutsovlachs during the time of the Greek-Italian War [1940] and the guerrilla war which followed. The Koutsovlachs had been obliged at that time either to leave Greece entirely or to be removed from the frontier regions to the interior of Greece, either to the Peloponnese or the Aegean islands.

I have recently been informed that a certain Rumanian periodical [not identified] presents me as being at the head of "fascist guerrillas" in Western Greece to drive out by force "the unfortunate Koutsovlach patriots" and send them to the Peloponnese. Such reports can emanate only from a country like Rumania. In Greece, Greeks can express themselves freely on all matters but they have no right to meddle in government activities, the responsibility for which rests with the government alone. In fact, I have not been to Western Greece since the end of the war.

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To answer the charges leveled against me, I have the following to say: I have never turned against all the Koutsovlachs, or more specifically, those who speak the Koutsovlach dialect. There are Koutsovlachs living in Thessaly and around the Pindus Mountain areas who are sincere Greek patriots. Many, in fact, distinguished themselves in Greek affairs even before the liberation. When, during the years of occupation [German-Italian], foreign propaganda attempted to incite them into carrying out anti-Greek activities, the Koutsovlachs answered that they knew nothing about a so-called special nationality in Greece but said that they were Greeks.

The matter, therefore, concerns only those who even before the Balkan Wars had been swayed by Rumanian propaganda. These persons, having at their disposal ample money, built churches, schools, and in general did not omit anything to reveal their pseudo-Rumanian nationality (because, in reality, the Koutsovlachs have no ethnological relation with the Rumanians). They did everything they could to express their hostile feelings toward their country, Greece. During the Greek-Italian War, many acted as spies and agents; during the guerrilla war, they willingly cooperated with the guerrillas in the murders and pillages in Macedonia.

Now these same people are asking that their sins be forgiven. However, who can guarantee that they are not wolves waiting for a new opportunity to attack? Who can persuade us that their staying along the frontier regions does not constitute a permanent national danger?

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